



South Dakota Department of the Military
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



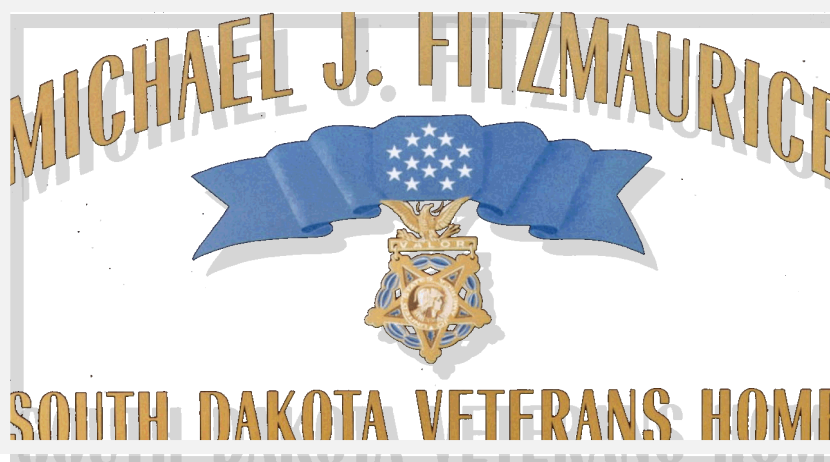
GROUNDBREAKING FOR NEW STATE VETERANS HOME

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs will host a groundbreaking ceremony for the new Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home on Wednesday, Sept. 25.

The ceremony will take place at 11 am MDT and will be held on the campus of the current Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home in Hot Springs (2500 Minnekahta Avenue).

Planned speakers for the ceremony include Gov. Dennis Daugaard, Lt. Gov. Matt Michels and Secretary of Veterans Affairs Larry Zimmerman.

The new facility incorporates the latest in nursing home construction design and staffing concepts and will have 100 residential rooms (52 skilled and 48 individual living). This two-story facility will have eight neighborhoods/households arranged around administrative and support amenities in the center.



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SD GUARD HELICOPTER CREW DEPARTS TO SUPPORT SOUTHWEST BORDER MISSION

Members of the South Dakota National Guard's Army Aviation Support Facility, of Rapid City, recently deployed for a mission to the U.S. Southwest border. The Guardsmen will provide aerial reconnaissance with LUH-72 Lakota helicopters in support of U.S. Customs and Border Protection to support the national effort to counter illegal immigration.

The Lakota provides an aerial platform equipped with visual and infrared cameras and a high-powered searchlight capable of providing an 'eye in the sky,' day or night. This allows the aircraft to assist in the direction of U.S. Border Patrol personnel on the ground toward areas of suspicious activity, which may include drug smuggling, human trafficking and illegal immigration.

This is the second time the SDNG has deployed aircraft in support of the Southwest border mission, but it's the first time its own LUH-72 aircraft will be used for this operation – the SDNG deployed an OH-58 Kiowa to the border for aerial surveillance in 2006-2007. The SDNG was first fielded Lakota helicopters in May 2011. Until now, the aircraft has mainly been used in support of state missions and crew training.



SDDVA FALL MINI CONFERENCES

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs will hold their Fall Mini-Conferences for County and Tribal Veterans Service Officers October 22-24, 2013, at the following locations:

- Oct. 22 Sturgis - Veterans Club, 868 Main Street
- Oct. 23 Pierre - American Legion, 520 S. Pierre Street
- Oct. 24 Brookings – City/County Building, 520 3rd Street

As in the past, the training sessions are scheduled to run from 10:00AM to 3:00PM. A portion of the training will be conducted by members of the Unified Judicial System informing veterans service officers of changes brought about during this year's legislative session regarding veterans and the court system.



NEW WATERTOWN READINESS CENTER TO ENHANCE PREPAREDNESS FOR GUARD SOLDIERS

South Dakota National Guard members, state and local government leaders, and community supporters gathered for the ceremonial ribbon cutting for SDNG's new regional readiness center in Watertown Saturday, Sept. 7.

The \$25 million, 85,000 square-foot training facility is now the consolidated home for units from Miller, Redfield, Sisseton, Webster and Watertown. The consolidation of these units to this more centralized location will save money, maximize resources, provide better training opportunities and develop more cohesive units that will be ready to better support state and federal missions along with disaster response.

Lt. Gov. Matt Michels, Representative Kristi Noem, Watertown Mayor Steve Thorson and Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, SDNG adjutant general, were among the many leaders in attendance for the historic event. It is clear among leadership that this new facility will enhance Soldiers' ability to train and be ready when they are called upon for duty, either home or abroad.

"This new modern training facility meets today's quality training needs of the units stationed here," said Reisch. "They now have a facility that truly ensures their readiness through their training. This building also has the capabilities to facilitate response to local emergencies."

The readiness center, which is home to about 400 Soldiers from the Headquarters and Headquarters Battery of the 1-147th Field Artillery Battalion, 147th Forward Support Company and Company A, 139th Brigade Support Battalion, features administrative office spaces, a large, hi-barreled drill floor, four classrooms, distance-learning center, library, training-simulation hall, maintenance-training bay, unit storage areas and a fitness center. The facility replaces Watertown's aging National Guard armory, which has been in existence since 1958. Construction on the new building began in August 2011.

While the consolidation of units and Soldiers provides great opportunities for Watertown, Reisch made it clear that the SDNG will not forget the communities who are losing their Guard units. "Sisseton, Webster, Miller and Redfield are all great Guard communities," said Reisch. "I have ensured all of their community leaders that if they have a community project or community disaster that they can continue to call on the South Dakota National Guard for support."

As the SDNG continues to ensure Soldier training and readiness needs for the future, decisions like the consolidation did not happen overnight. The process of funding new armories is lengthy, and can take upwards of 15 years. Plans for the readiness center have been in the works since 1996. The readiness center was selected for funding through the military construction process, which provides for new facilities that enhance training and readiness for units.

"The community of Watertown has worked hand-in-hand with the SDNG for almost 20 years to make this facility a reality," Reisch said. "We look forward to many continued years of that strong partnership with the people here, and could not be more excited than cementing that relationship here today."



WAGNER STAND DOWN

With over 50 veterans in attendance, Roy Farabee, County Veterans Service Officer for Charles Mix and Gregory Counties, has deemed the Wagner Stand Down a huge success.

Farabee was pleased with the support from the vendors, service organizations, and agencies that participated in this one-day event that affords veterans and their families to learn more about the programs and services that are available to them.

County VSO's Richard Beringer (Bon Homme) and Fred Kuil (Douglas) assisted Farabee at this event. SDDVA Field Officer Kevin Bowen represented the Department at this event and noted that

it was great to have this many veterans and families participate in this event.



FALLEN HEROES HONORED IN BELLE FOURCHE

Community and business leaders, veterans and families of South Dakota's OEF/OIF Fallen Heroes gathered at the Center of the Nation Monument Park in Belle Fourche Wednesday, September 11, to honor South Dakota's fallen heroes.

SDDVA Secretary of Veterans Affairs Larry Zimmerman was honored to be able to participate in this program and the dedication of the United States flags that have been added to the traveling Fallen Heroes display. The addition of the 35 United States Flags to the Fallen Heroes exhibit is in thanks to veterans service organizations, CTVSOs, and business, community and tribal leaders.



If you are interested in securing the banners for an event in your community, give us a call — 605-773-8242.

Upcoming Events

2013

Sept. 13—Stand Down—Watertown—Salvation Army (621 4th St SE) - 11:00 am
 Sept. 13-14— Vietnam Veterans Welcome Home Retreat—Aberdeen
 Sept. 20—Stand Down—Sioux Falls—VFW Post 628 (3601 S. Minnesota Ave.) 8:00 am—3:00 pm
 Sept. 21—Black Hills Veterans March—Deadwood
 Sept. 24—Stand Down—Aberdeen
 Sept. 25—Groundbreaking Ceremony for the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home—11:00 am MT
 Sept. 28-29—American Legion Golf Tournament—Webster
 Oct. 1—Black Hills National Cemetery Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am
 Oct. 9—Stand Down—White River
 Oct. 18—1978th AQ Reintegration 30 Day Yellow Ribbon Event—Rapid City
 Dec. 15—Wreaths Across America Ceremony—Black Hills National Cemetery—10:00 am

2014

Jan. 25-26- 235th MP Reintegration 30 Day Yellow Ribbon Event—Chamberlain
 Feb. 8- 129th MPAD Reintegration 30 Day Yellow Ribbon Event—Rapid City
 April 5-6- 152nd Reintegration 30 Day Yellow Ribbon Event—Pierre

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